

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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## Springfield man named SD Guard Lieutenant of the Year

RAPID CITY, S.D. - The South Dakota National Guard announced a Springfield man as the 2016 recipient of the Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award, naming him the SDNG's Lieutenant of the Year.

First Lt. Alan Armstrong, who currently serves as the executive officer in the 200th Engineer Company in Pierre, was selected as the most exceptional lieutenant after competing against lieutenants from several of the SDNG's major commands.

The award was presented by the National Guard Association of South Dakota at its annual officers' conference in Rapid City, April 23.

"It was an honor to even compete for this award," said Armstrong. "This award is a direct reflection of the training and mentoring from my leaders and the support I have received along the way from my family."

Armstrong, who has more than 12 years of service in the military – six of those years as a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard – first enlisted in the active duty Army as an indirect fire infantryman with Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After transferring to the SDARNG in 2009, he enrolled in the Officer Candidate School program and received his commission as a second lieutenant in August 2012.

"When I first began the OCS program, an instructor reflected on his job of training us to lead his son or daughter someday," said Armstrong. "I took that to heart, and I have made it my goal to ensure the Soldiers I lead have the training and guidance to accomplish their missions, be the best at it, and do it safely, so we can all return home to our families."

He served as a platoon leader (2012-2014) in the 211th Engineer Company in both Madison and De Smet before moving to his current position.

"First Lt. Armstrong always performs his duties and accomplishes all assigned missions with the utmost professionalism," said Col. Patrick Parady, commander of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. "His accomplishments and dedication to duty over the past year have definitely earned him the distinction of being recognized as the South Dakota National Guard's most outstanding lieutenant of the year."

In addition to his responsibilities in the National Guard, Armstrong not only ranches near Springfield for himself but assists some neighbors with their ranching and farming operations. He is also employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service as a soil conservationist.

"Armstrong is a professional officer with outstanding leadership ability and exceptional proficiency in engineering," said Capt. Mark Francisco, 200th Eng. Co. commander. "He continually strives to better himself, his unit and the community he serves."

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Armstrong is an active member in his local church, the American Legion Post 132, and volunteers his time at various community events.

“The support my wife and I receive from our National Guard family is beyond remarkable,” said Armstrong. “I am proud to be a member of such a great organization. I look forward to many more years of service with the Soldiers I have the privilege to lead and serve with.”

Other officers representing their major command for this year’s award competition were 1st Lt. Joshua Nelson, 114th Fighter Wing, and 1st Lt. Terry Berndt, 109th Regional Support Group.

The Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award was established in 1968 to annually recognize the most outstanding lieutenant in the South Dakota National Guard. Selection is based on exceptional qualities of leadership, values and performance.

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**1st Lt. Alan Armstrong:** Lt. Col. John J. Steele Award recipient and South Dakota National Guard 2016 Lieutenant of the Year (U.S. Army National Guard file photo/Released)

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